



Life Group Work Sheet

John 21:1-25 - Built for Others

September 8, 2013

In John 21:15-25, Jesus forgives Peter and calls him to ministry, and in doing this, Jesus reveals a little bit of God's will for Peter's life. God's will for our lives is a question that many wrestle with today. The following attempt to determine God's will for his people and how we can apply this will in our everyday lives.

Part 1 - Life to Text

1. Have you ever wondered what the will of God for your life is? Share a story of how you discovered God's will and how you moved forward with this realization.

Most of us have wrestled with this question in our lives, often several times in our lives. There is no 'right answer' to this question; this question simply serves as an opportunity to gauge what is everyone's opinion on the will of God for a person's life.

What we eventually want is people to recognize that the will of God is very simple: to follow him and live a holy life. But that conclusion doesn't need to be reached at this point, as we will talk about it more below.

Part 2 - In the Text

2. Read John 21:15-25. If you could sum up God's will for both Peter and John in one sentence, what would it be?

From looking at this passage, one can see that God's will for both Peter and John is to 'follow' him. The specifics of what that looks like differs for both of them. For Peter, it leads to his eventual crucifixion. For John, he endures a lot of persecution before dying a natural death. But what is important is that at the most basic level—and at the level that we can know confidently, God's will for their lives is to follow him.

- a. If you could sum up God's will for your life in one sentence, what would it be? What does your answer look like in day-to-day living?

In the same way, God's will for our lives is pretty basic: to follow him. While many of us want to know the *specific* will of God for our lives in *every situation*, that is an unrealistic expectation that we don't see in Scripture. God calls us to be faithful and follow him, regardless of what happens.

With that being said, a follow question might be, "Does this knowledge help us in making decisions like what we will see in #5?"

- b. Is this the same or different than God's will for Peter and John? How is it similar or different? Why is it similar or different?

The will of God for our lives is the same as the will of God's for Peter's and John's life: to follow him. Will it look different? Absolutely. But the calling is nevertheless the same. Encourage people to think through what 'following' looks like in our lives today compared to Peter's and John's day.

3. Read 1 Thes. 4:3-8; 5:16-18. What do these texts tell us about God's will for our lives? How does this conclusion relate to that from John 21 above?

1 Thes. provides a very similar answer to John 21 regarding the question of God's will, just going into more specifics. This passage in 1 Thes. gives us an understanding of what it means to 'follow' Jesus by laying out a list of virtues and vices.

4. When we are not focused on God's will for our lives but are instead looking at others, we can become consumed with God's will for others, much like Peter in John 21. This preoccupation can lead to jealousy and bitterness. How can we cultivate contentment each day with God's plan for us?

A follow-up question to this one is to consider the following quote by Pastor Andy Stanley:

"Your jealousy is really an issue between you and God. What God did for one he could've done for you too. But for some reason he didn't. Your problem isn't with the person who has what you don't; it's with your Creator. He owes you."

How does this quote relate to John 21? Is it helpful in revealing the source of envy?

Part 3 - Text to Life

5. Based off your conclusions from John 21 and 1 Thes. 4-5, how would you respond in the following situations?

- a. A young Christian asks you what it means to follow God's will and how he can discover God's will for his life.

Remember the conclusion that was reached in #2 and #3: the will of God is to follow Jesus. We learn more of what this looks like through fellowship with God and studying his word, where he reveals what his will is.

- b. Your daughter is trying to pick out a college for next year and wants to honor God in her decision. What counsel do you give?

When thinking of the will of God in specific situations, it is helpful to remind yourself that above all, God's will for our lives is to follow him. If one of the options in your decision provides a better opportunity to do that, it is an "early favorite." But recognize that a lot of times we think that something provides a better chance to follow God, when in the end it does not.

Example: it may seem like going to a Christian college provides a better opportunity to 'follow God' and so it should be the place where you counsel your child to go. Yet they may be better served in a secular school where they can share the gospel and lead others to faith. There is no specific 'right' answer to this question; but remember that the principle of following Jesus must be central.

- c. A close friend of yours is a faithful Christian and successful businessman. After years in the business world, he desires to enter full-time ministry, and asks you for advice. How do you help him discern God's will?

This question is similar to the one above. In addition to what was mentioned above, be sure to emphasize that entering ministry does not mean that someone is 'following Jesus more'. Oftentimes we are more effective at ministry in our secular jobs than we would be if we entered into the ministry. For some, the will of God is certainly to ministry. For most, however, that is not the case.